

squandering billions of dollars in budget surpluses and making massive cuts to vital programs. The President's misguided priorities have forced him to borrow money from foreign nations like China and Japan, more than all of 42 Presidents combined. This is not a record to be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, we simply cannot handle more of the same, and unfortunately that is what this budget proposes. I stand ready to work with Democrats and Republicans to take our Nation in a new direction of fiscal responsibility. We plan to do that.

VICTIMS OF USS "COLE" AND JUSTICE

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, as the USS *Cole* patrolled the seas around Yemen, a boat piloted by al-Qaeda international criminals drew near to the Navy destroyer and bombed the ship. On that day in the year 2000, 17 American soldiers were murdered.

The families of these 17 soldiers are now suing the Sudanese Government for damages. Why? Because the Sudan funded and provided training for these terrorists. The Sudanese Government is outraged that they should be held financially responsible. However, a U.S. Federal court judge disagrees and is allowing the victims' families to continue their pursuit.

Sudan is now asking the U.S. Supreme Court to dismiss this unique lawsuit. But the Supreme Court must allow this case to proceed and the victims to obtain justice. Sudan fed the terrorist cells that attacked the *Cole*. They gave them safe harbor and let them exist.

U.S. citizens murdered by international terrorists overseas must be able to seek damages from the country responsible for the crime. The message to these nations that sponsor terror, you too will pay for your sins when you sponsor international outlaws.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1015

PRESIDENT BUSH'S BUDGET IS FISCALLY AND MORALLY IRRESPONSIBLE

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, it is easy to tell where President Bush's priorities lie when you look at his proposed fiscal year 2008 budget. It is with big business and the wealthiest 1 percent.

This proposed budget is fiscally irresponsible, creating trillions of dollars in new deficit, but it is also morally irresponsible for slashing funding for Medicare, education, energy, homeland security and veterans.

The President's budget slashes Medicare and Medicaid funding by about

\$300 billion over the next 10 years, without offering relief to millions of Americans without health insurance. The Bush budget also cuts funds for renewable energy grants, despite his State of the Union pledge to tackle our Nation's energy crisis. He even reduces State homeland security preparedness grants. Perhaps worst of all, the Bush budget cuts veterans health care by \$3.5 billion.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats will put the needs of working families first in our budget in the coming weeks.

AFGHANISTAN'S OPIUM PROBLEM

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, America has a drug problem, and I am not referring to the war on drugs on our streets. I am referring to the booming illegal opium trade in Afghanistan. This is our problem, Mr. Speaker, because the huge profits from growing opium in Afghanistan are being used against our troops.

Though illegal, opium production has skyrocketed in Afghanistan in recent years, and the results are deadly. Enormous profits often end up in the hands of the Taliban and local warlords who use it to buy weapons, pay fighters and bribe officials.

We must adjust our policies if we are to see sustained stability in Afghanistan. Eradicating opium must become a priority. We must crack down on the drug lords, train local law enforcement, and help build the Afghan economy to provide opportunities for making an honest living. And we must ask our friends in Afghanistan's government to help us in this effort. The safety of our troops depends on it.

INJURED TROOPS DESERVE BETTER THAN WHAT THEY GOT AT WALTER REED'S BUILDING 18

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, thanks to a 4-month investigation by the Washington Post, the world learned last week that our Nation's injured soldiers are not receiving the care they deserve once they return from active duty.

The Post investigation described conditions at Walter Reed Hospital that are deplorable. One of the buildings at the facility, Building 18, showed signs of neglect everywhere: mouse droppings, cockroaches, stained carpets, cheap mattresses and mold on the ceilings. After the Post printed its findings last week, the Pentagon finally started renovating Building 18, but it should not have taken the embarrassment of this investigation for the Pentagon to do the right thing.

American soldiers who have put their lives on the line for this Nation deserve

better than what they are getting at Building 18. The Pentagon says it was forced into housing hundreds of troops there after all the other buildings were filled to capacity, and now the President wants to send more troops to Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that this Congress ensure that the Pentagon meets the needs of our injured soldiers.

CARD CHECK BILL

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the so-called Employee Free Choice Act which provides employees anything but free choice. Contrary to its title, the bill would strip workers of their right to privacy in union organization elections by removing the option of a secret ballot.

This paradoxical bill will kill private voting rights, making workers vote publicly through a mandatory card check where union bosses gather authorization cards supposedly signed by workers expressing their desire for a union to represent them. Such mandatory card checks make workers' personal votes known to their coworkers, their union organizers and their employers, stripping workers of the right to choose freely and anonymously whether to unionize. This leaves workers vulnerable to coercion, pressure, outright intimidation and threats.

Supporters of the bill claim it is necessary to preserve workers' rights, when, in reality, this bill is not about workers at all. Rather, it is about Big Labor's last desperate attempt to retain power.

I urge my colleagues to vote for workers' rights by voting "no" on this bill.

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Employee Free Choice Act. Too many workers are being harassed by their employers because they want to form a union. We must put an end to scare tactics. This bill restores the right of workers to bargain for a better life. It will help 6 million workers join for better wages, benefits, working conditions and improving the quality of life. No more employer harassment. Simple and fair. The card-based system is pressure free. When workers choose, bargaining results are more peaceful, worker-friendly. Please vote for this important legislation.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

(Mr. AL GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this is the very last day of the